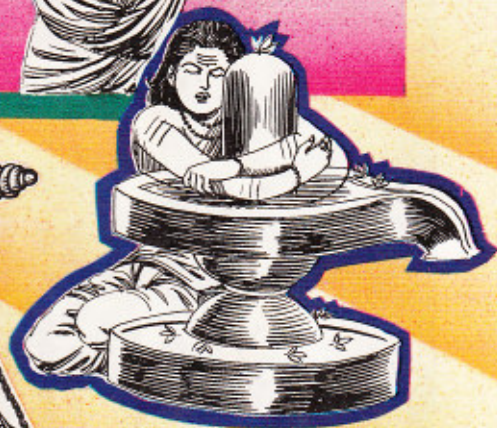
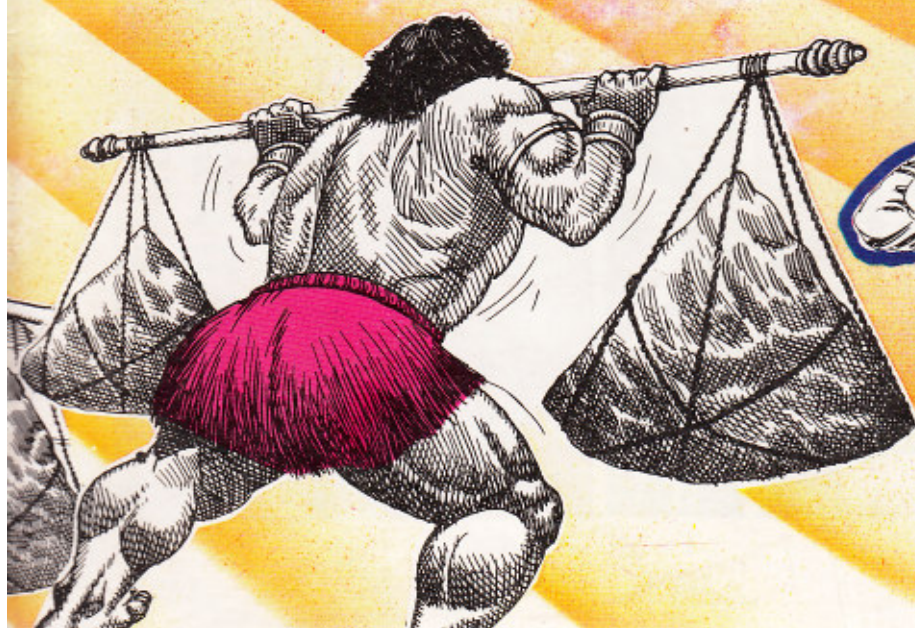
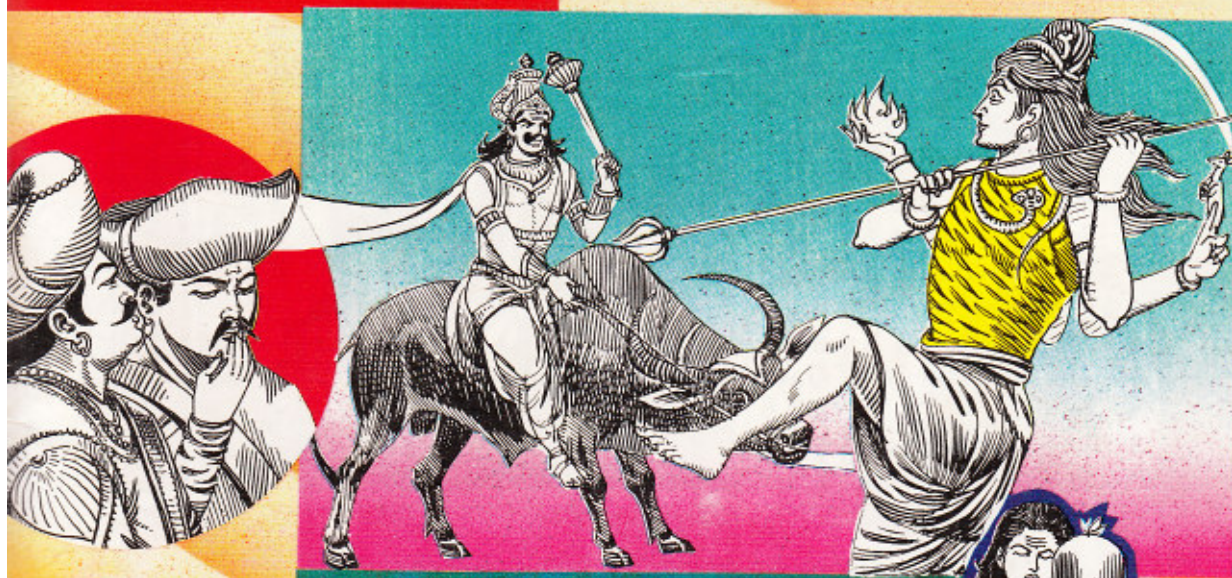


Pictorial Stories For Children



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HOW PARIKSHIT ATTAINED LIBERATION

Art: Shankar
Tamil Original: R.V. Raman
English Rendering: Swami Raghaveshananda

Abhimanyu was Arjuna's son. Parikshit was Abhimanyu's son. He ruled Hastinapura efficiently. One day he went to the forest for hunting. Getting tired after sometime, he went in search of water. He found an Ashram after a long trek.

1



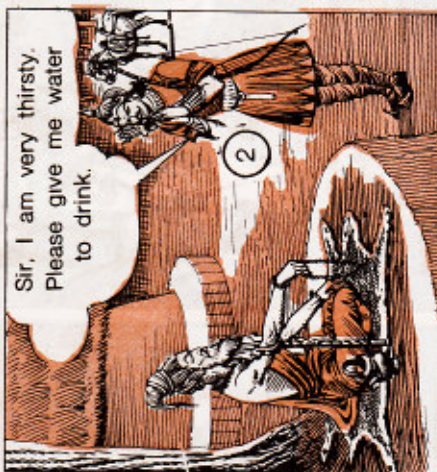
A little while after, Sameeka's son Shringi returned to the Ashram. He was wild with anger, when he saw this scene.



Let Takshaka, the king of the snakes, kill within seven days the king who insulted my father thus.

4

Sage Sameeka was meditating there.

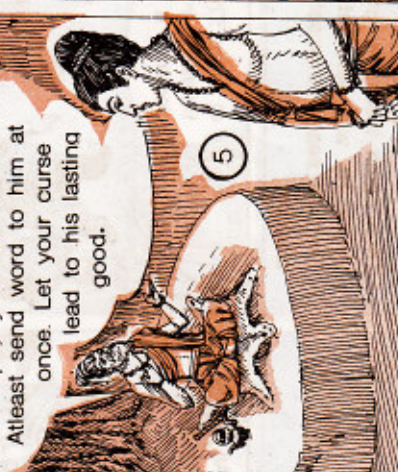


Sir, I am very thirsty. Please give me water to drink.

2

When the sage got up from his meditation and learnt about the curse...

My son, the Lord Sri Krishna Himself, protected Parikshit, when he was in his mother's womb. What a pity you have cursed him. Atleast send word to him at once. Let your curse lead to his lasting good.



5

The sage was then in deep meditation and did not hear him. But Parikshit thought the sage was ignoring him. In anger he drew a dead snake with his arrow, hung it round the sage's neck and left the place.



3

When informed of the curse, the king deeply regretted his impulsive behaviour. He turned his mind to God.



O Lord! I have only seven more days to live. I take refuge in You. Grant me liberation.

6

He crowned his son Janamejaya as king and retired to the banks of the Ganga to be immersed in God-thought. Hearing the news, many sages visited him.

O Sages! Takshaka will come at any time to bite me. As long as I am alive, bless me that I ceaselessly think of the Supreme Lord.



Let it be so.

Suka narrated the glorious sports of the Divine Incarnations. Hearing the glories of the Lord, Parikshit was in great joy, with his heart melting in devotion.

O Sage! Blessed am I to hear the glories of the Lord from your holy mouth.

May you attain the highest good!



Then came there the great but young sage Suka, the son of Vyasa. He was reverentially received by Parikshit and others. Then, all seated themselves to hear from Suka words of wisdom.

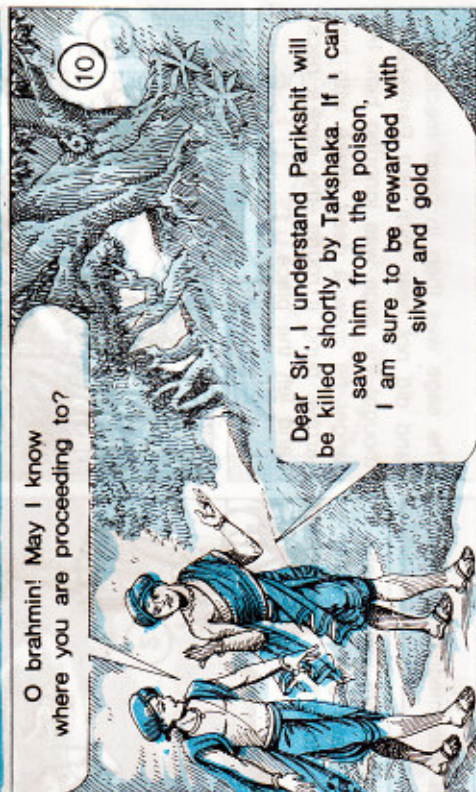
O king! The Lord's name alone yields good at all times. If you dwell in God-thought till your life departs, it will give you everlasting happiness.

Hence, I shall narrate to you Srimad Bhagavat. Listen to the glories of the God's Incarnations with devotion.



On the seventh day, two brahmins met each other on their way to the Ganga.

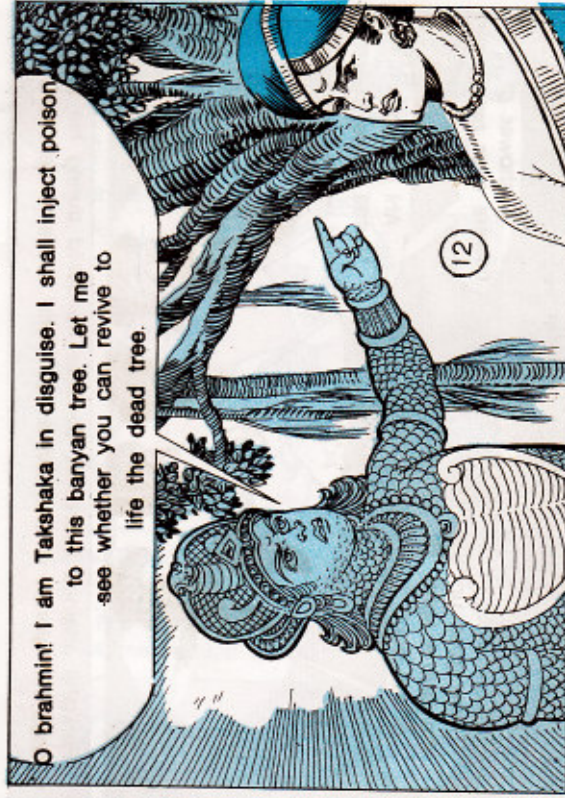
O brahmin! May I know where you are proceeding to?



Dear Sir, I understand Parikshit will be killed shortly by Takshaka. If I can save him from the poison, I am sure to be rewarded with silver and gold.



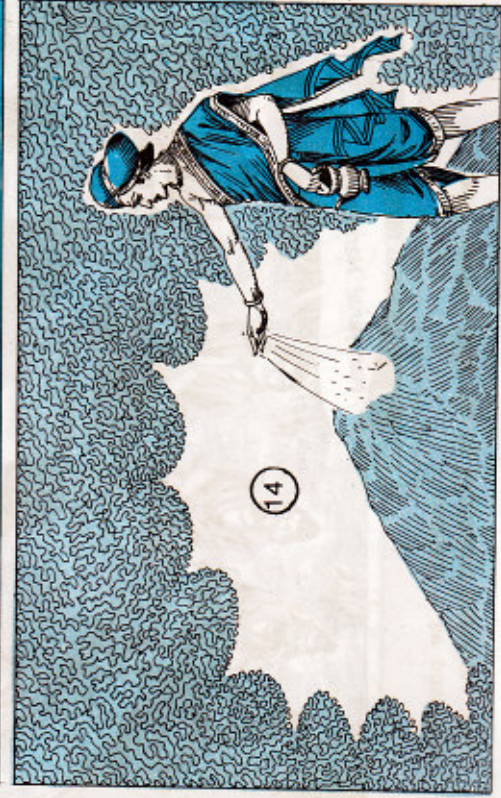
By my Guru's grace, I can cure even one poisoned by Adishesha.



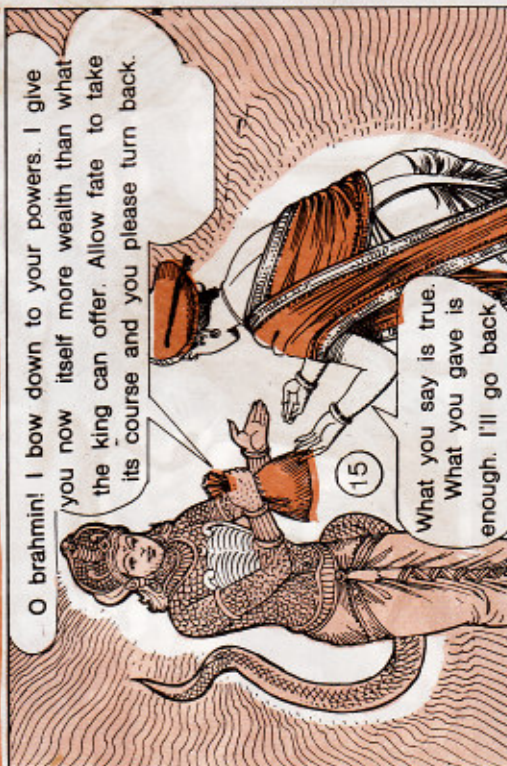
Takshaka bit the banyan tree.



The tree was reduced to ashes. The brahmin sprinkled water on it and the tree came back to life.



Takshaka was surprised to see the power of the brahmin.



O brahmin! I bow down to your powers. I give you now itself more wealth than what the king can offer. Allow fate to take its course and you please turn back.

What you say is true. What you gave is enough. I'll go back.

Then Takshaka proceeded to the king's place, again disguised as a brahmin.



Narayana! Narayana!

Before anybody could even observe, he reverted to his snake form and bit Parikshit, who was in deep contemplation. The king fell down dead.



There goes up the Divine light of his soul!

A shower of flowers over his soul

Ah! Shringi's course came true!

18

Parikshit attained liberation, because he heard during his last days the glories of the Divine Lord with supreme devotion.

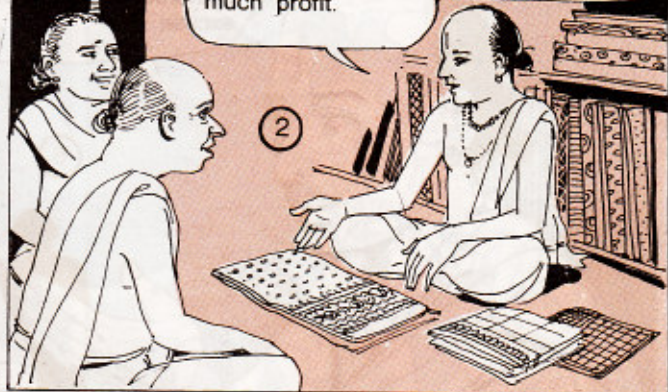
SRI BHANUDASA

Sri Bhanudasa was a great devotee. He lived in Pandarpur where he owned a textile shop. He lived a virtuous life constantly thinking of God.



Bhanudasa's shop....

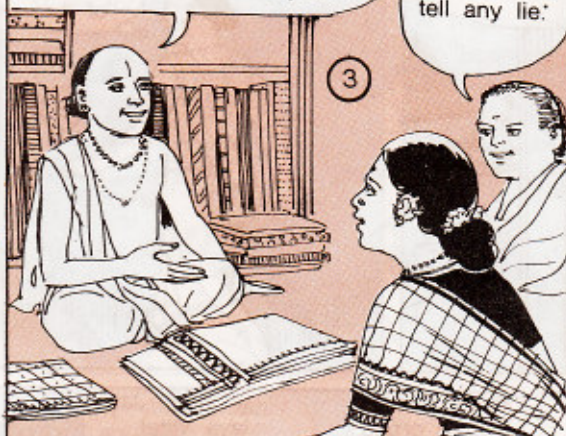
Sir, look at this. The cost price of this is only five copper pieces. You give me a little more than that. I don't want much profit.



Another time....

This Saree's texture is very good. But it is of an old stock. So, let me reduce its price.

He is a true devotee. So he does not tell any lie.

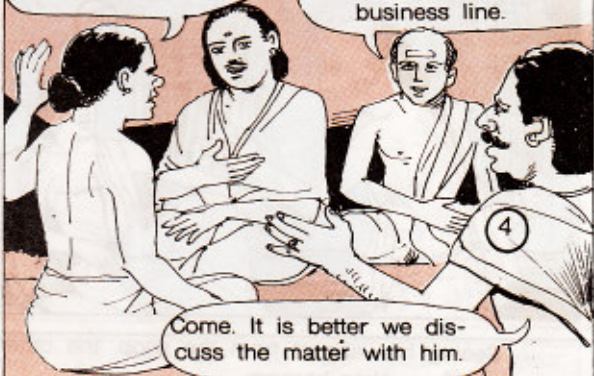


As he was truthful the other merchants always grumbled about him.

He is always truthful, and sells the material without much profit.

not only affects our business but we are losing heavily.

Such a truthful person should not enter the business line.



Come. It is better we discuss the matter with him.

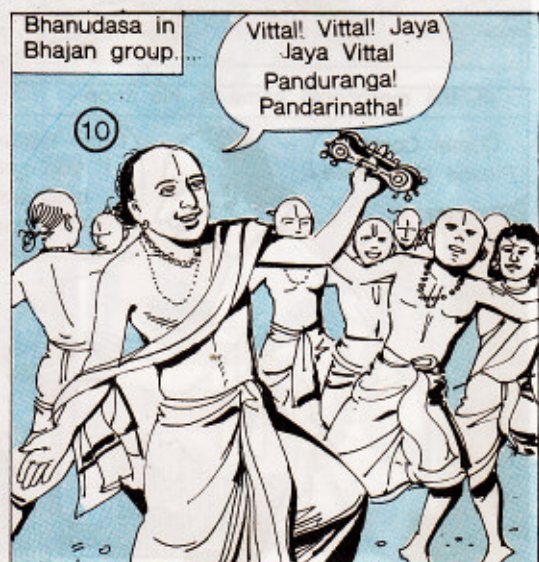
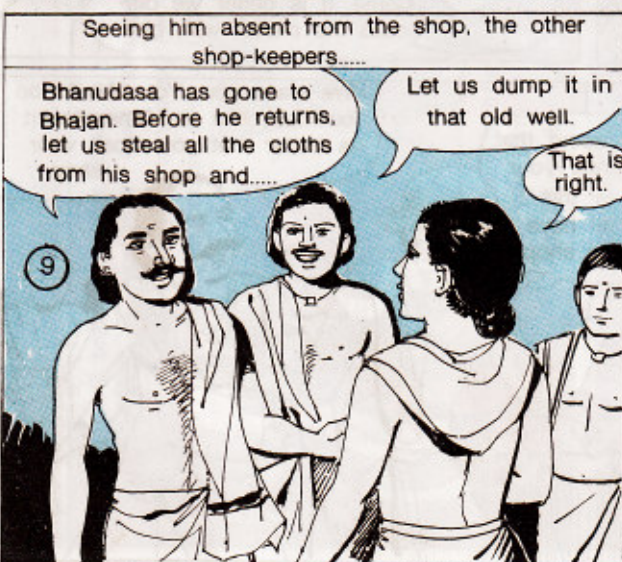
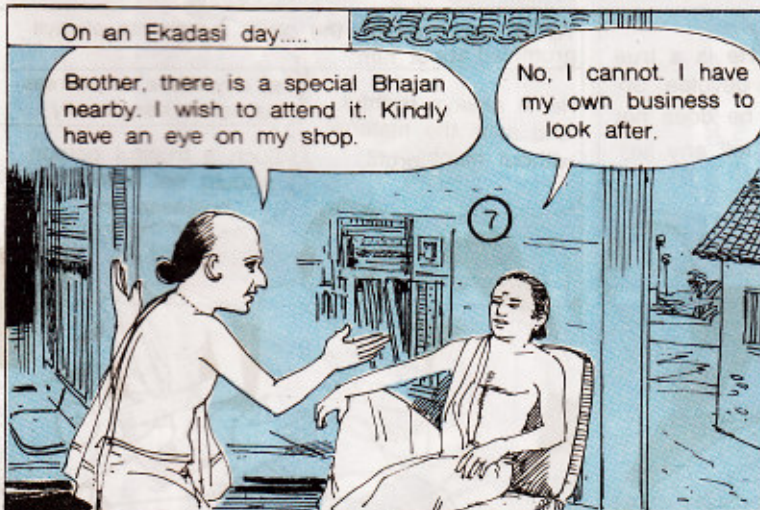
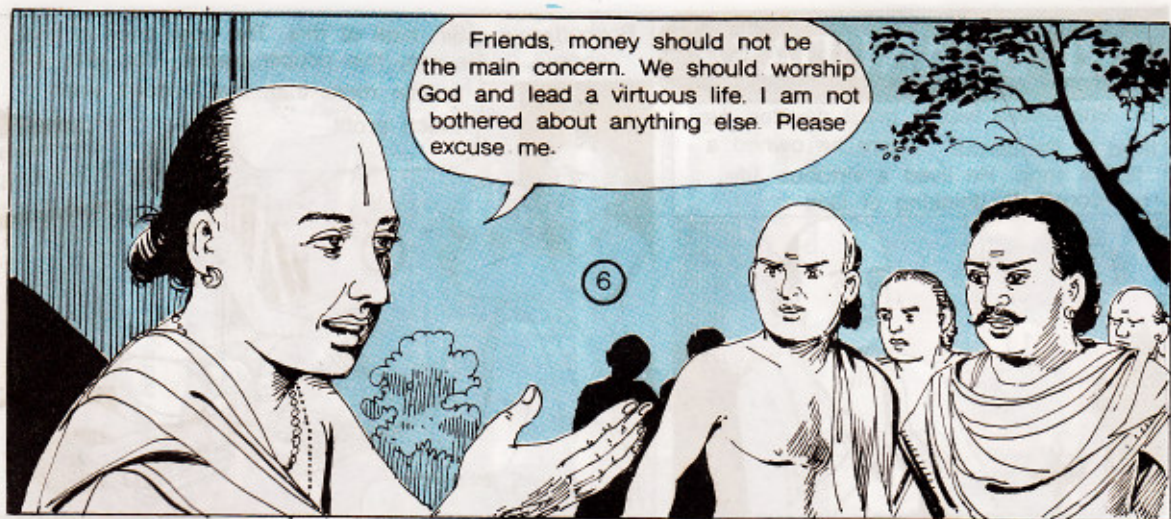
All the merchants came to his shop.

Come! Come! Please be seated.

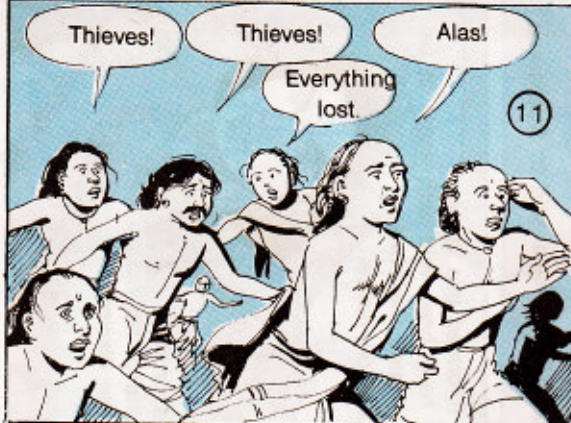
Don't bother about that. If you continue your business in this manner, we all have to close down our shops.

We warn you. You should do business like us. Otherwise it is better that you close your shop.





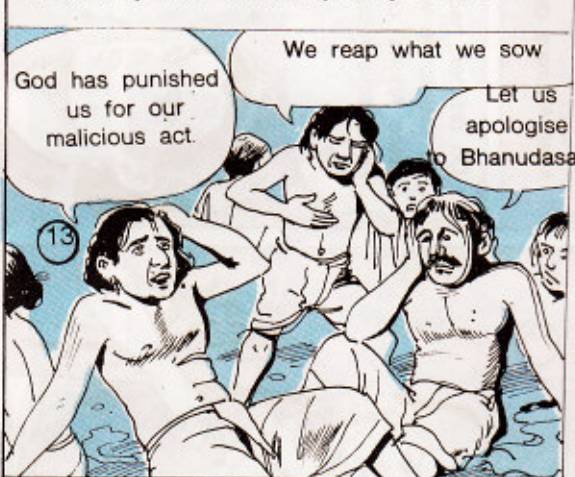
When the shop-keepers returned after dumping the garments in the well, they found great confusion near the market.



The thieves took away all the garments from the other shops. They beat severely whoever opposed



After they were beaten up, they sat worried.



Bhanudasa was returning from the Bhajan



They all bowed down to him and said... Please forgive us.



Is it so? You have repented for your deeds. Lord Panduranga will forgive you and shower His grace on you soon. Don't worry. God is compassionate.



THE FAVOURITE DISCIPLE

English Rendering:

Swami Raghaveshananda

Tamil Original: Murali

Art: Sankar



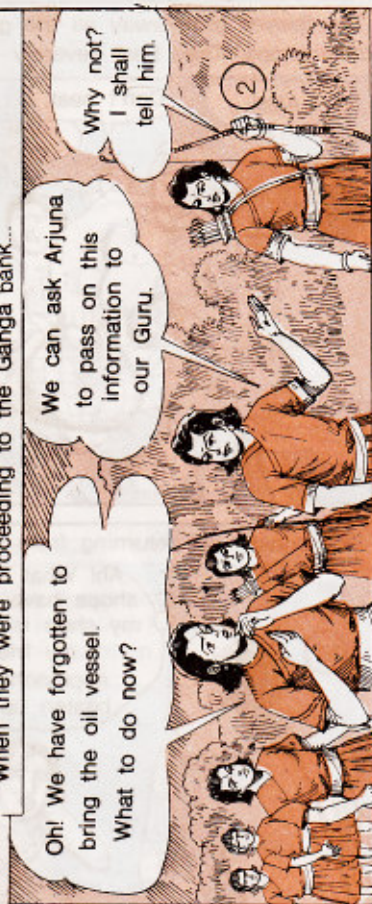
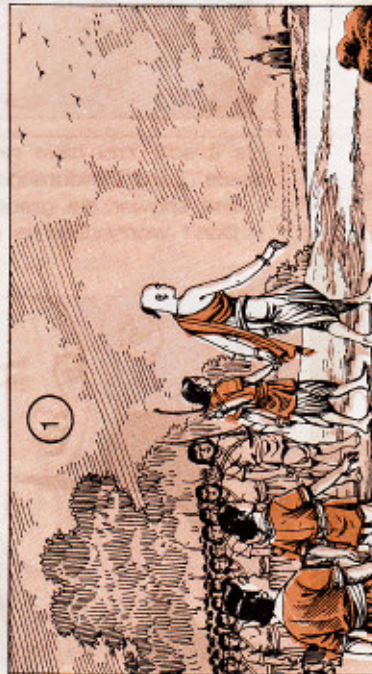
One day, Dronacharya, the Guru of the Kauravas and the Pandavas was on the way to the river Ganga for an oil bath. The disciples too accompanied him.

When they were proceeding to the Ganga bank...

Oh! We have forgotten to bring the oil vessel. What to do now?

We can ask Arjuna to pass on this information to our Guru.

Why not? I shall tell him.



Sir, you should forgive us. We have not brought the oil vessel.

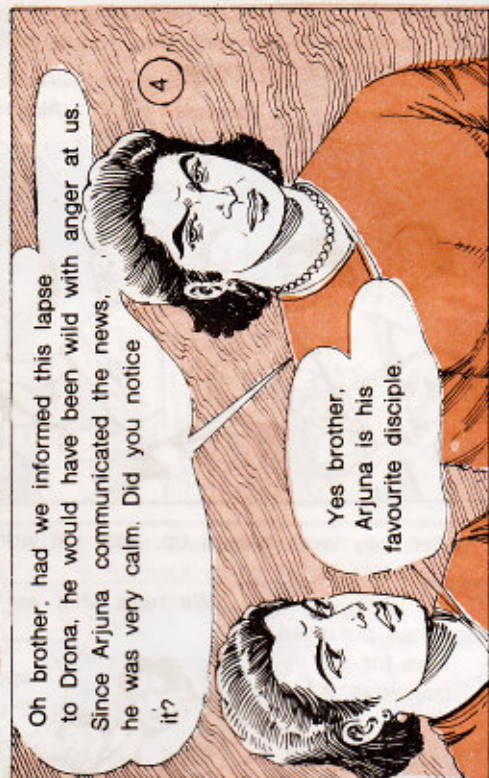
It does not matter. You go and fetch it.



Oh brother, had we informed this lapse to Drona, he would have been wild with anger at us. Since Arjuna communicated the news, he was very calm. Did you notice it?

Yes brother, Arjuna is his favourite disciple.

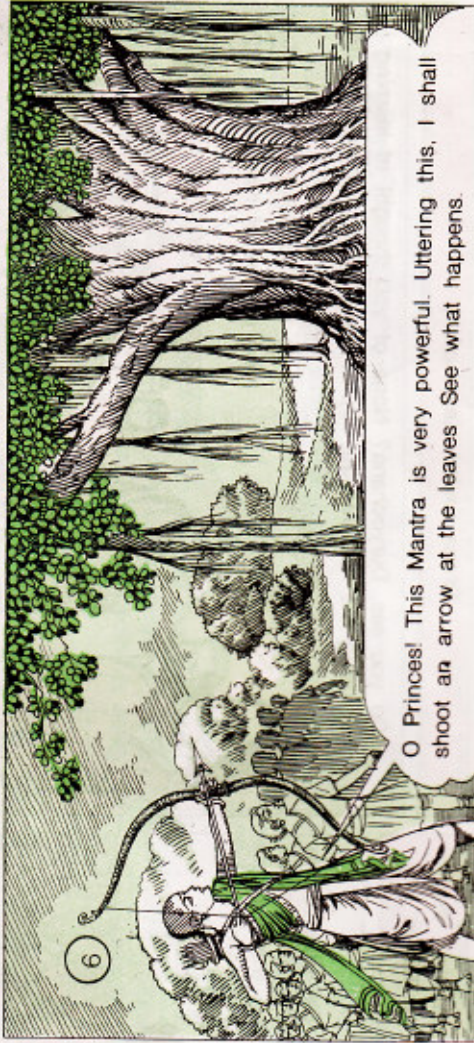
After Arjuna's departure, Duryodhana said to Dushasana.



Drona overheard the conversation.



When they were waiting under a banyan tree, Drona wrote a Mantra on the soil with his arrow.

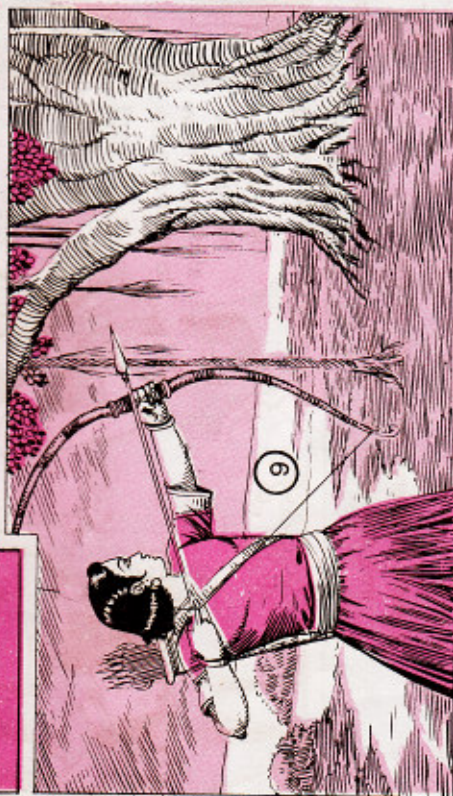


It pierced every single leaf of the tree and then fell down.

After some time, Arjuna was returning with the oil vessel. He saw on the way the Mantra written on the ground. He also noticed that all the leaves had been pierced.



After thinking for a while, he repeated that Mantra and shot an arrow. What a wonder! It pierced another hole in all the leaves.



Drona finished his bath. When they were all returning, they were astonished to find a second hole in all the leaves in the same banyan tree.

Arjuna! Is it your work?

Yes, Sir! Forgive me. Uttering the Mantra, I shot the arrow and learnt a new lesson.



With great satisfaction, he went to the river and handed over the oil vessel to his Guru.



Drona smiled meaningfully.

Do you see, Duryodhana? None of you thought of learning or using the new Mantra. Arjuna had that eagerness. That is why, he is dear to me. So don't be jealous of him.

12



MARKANDEYA

Tamil Original: Vivekanandadas

Art: Sankar

English rendering: Swami Raghaveshananda

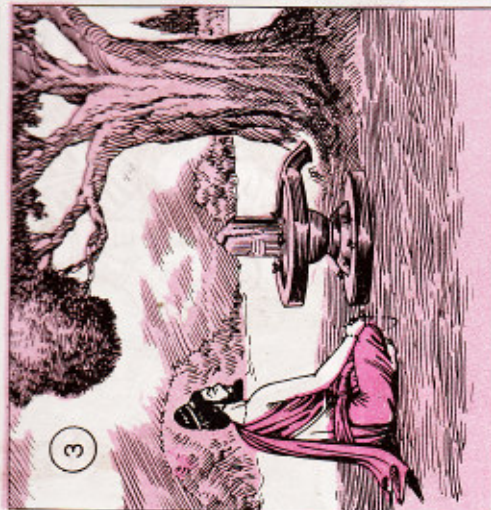
Maruthuvathi was married to Mrikandu, a great Tapasvi. She was very pious and served her husband devotedly. They lived in a forest hermitage, leading an austere life. They were childless.



Once Mrikandu went to the sacred Kashi, bathed in the holy Ganga at Manikarnika Ghat and worshipped Viswanatha, Visalakshi and other gods and goddesses in the various temples.



Staying thereafter near the temple of Lord Viswanatha, Mrikandu performed great penance and contemplated on Shiva.



Pleased by his devotion, Lord Shiva appeared!



Ask for a boon!
I shall grant!

O Lord! Grant
me a son.

Do you want a son who would live for a hundred years but would be mediocre, indisciplined and characterless? Or do you choose a boy who would live only for sixteen years but would be good-natured, well disciplined and greatly devoted to Me?



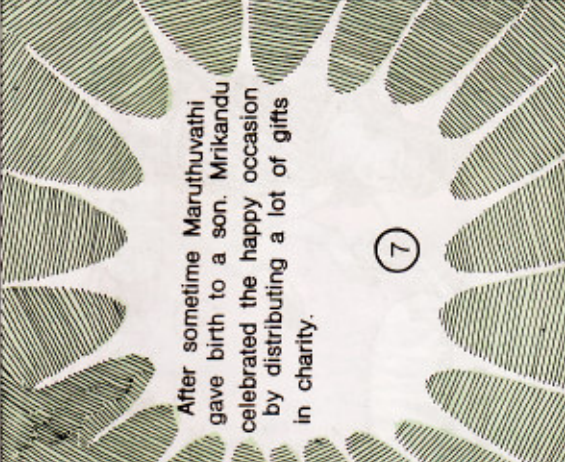
I want only a child who would be ever devoted to You and worship You. I don't mind if his life be short



6

Your boon is granted

After sometime Maruthuvathi gave birth to a son. Markandeya celebrated the happy occasion by distributing a lot of gifts in charity.



7

Lord Brahma appeared...



Name the infant as Markandeya

8

Markandeya grew as a pious and well disciplined boy. greatly devoted to Shiva. He completed the study of the Vedas. He was nearing the age of sixteen. The parents were deeply worried as his life would shortly come to an end.

They explained to him, why they were grieving. Markandeya consoled them...

Going to Kashi, Markandeya bathed in Manikarnika Ghat. He whole-heartedly worshipped Lord Viswanatha with flowers.

What is bothering you both that you are so much worried?



9

Don't worry, by the grace of Lord Shiva, I shall overcome even Yama and return. Bless me.



10

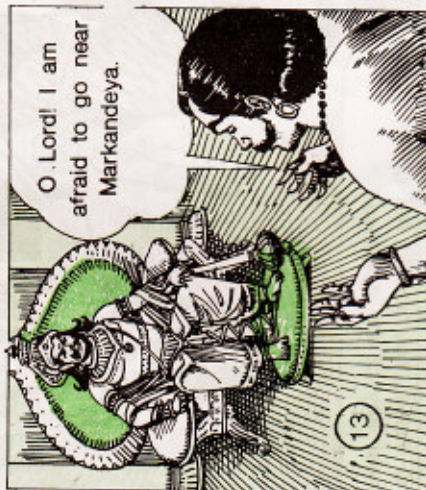


11

Lord Shiva appeared...



Yama's messenger dared not approach him since he was deeply absorbed in the worship of Lord Shiva. He returned to Yama in great fear.



Yama, getting confirmation from Chitragnya that the moment of death for Markandeya had come, called his minister Kalan.



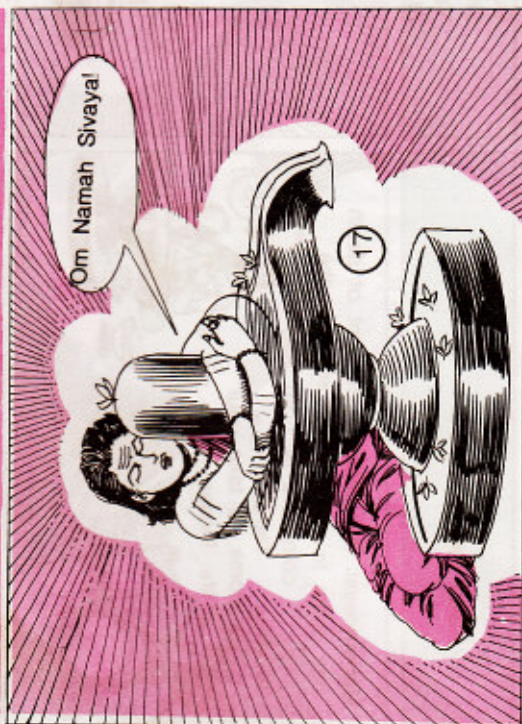
Kalan reached Kashi in no time.



But Markandeya refused to go, leaving his worship of Lord Shiva. So, Kalan too returned unsuccessfully to Yama. Then Yama himself, in anger, came to Kashi to take away the life of Markandeya.



Yama threw the death noose on Markandeya!



Lord Shiva, appeared out of the Linga and kicked Yama. Yama fell down from his vehicle, the buffalo.



Markandeya praised the glory of Shiva.



Markandeya! I bless you to live for ever as a boy of sixteen years.

O Yama! You should not go anywhere near any of my devotees.



What we have to learn from this story which appears in 'Skanda Purana', is that by whole-hearted devotion to the Supreme God even destiny can be overcome.

21

THE STORY OF KAVADI

Tamil Original: Aravindan
Art: Sankar
English Rendering:
Swami Raghaveshananda

Sage Agastya worshipped two mountain peaks of Himalayas known as Shivagiri and Shaktigiri. He wanted to take them to his abode in the south. So he sought the grace of Lord Muruga. By His grace, he could then carry them. On the way to his abode, he grounded them in a forest, near Thirukedaram.



After the death of Surapadma, his friend Idumbasura was coming by that way, seeking the grace of Lord Muruga. He met Agastya and bowed to him.



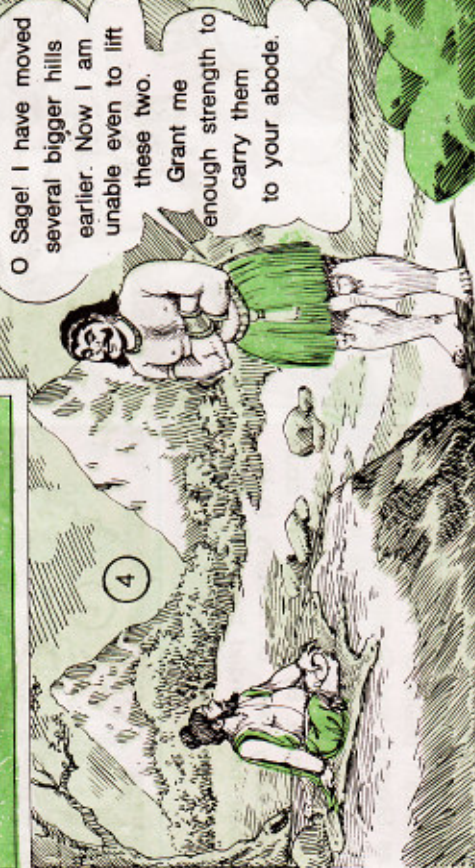
O Sage! Please bless me. I want to spend my days in the service of Lord Muruga.



If you carry these two peaks to my abode, Lord Muruga will bless you.

I am blessed. I shall certainly carry out your wish.

He tried his best to carry the two mounts. He was, however, shocked to find that he could not even lift them, which were so easily carried by Agastya, a little earlier.



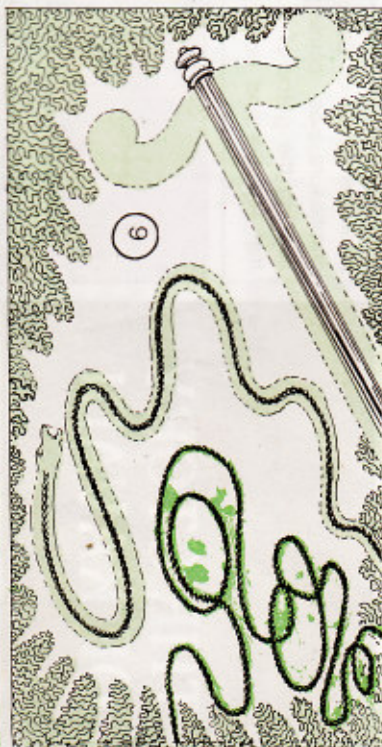
O Sage! I have moved several bigger hills earlier. Now I am unable even to lift these two. Grant me enough strength to carry them to your abode.

Agastya Muni, out of compassion, taught him the sacred mantra of Sri Muruga and the way to worship Him.



Idumba was surprised to see the power of the Mantra taught by the sage.

Idumba worshipped Muruga as instructed. As a result, eight snakes appeared and turned into the form of ropes. The Brahma Danda became a huge stick.

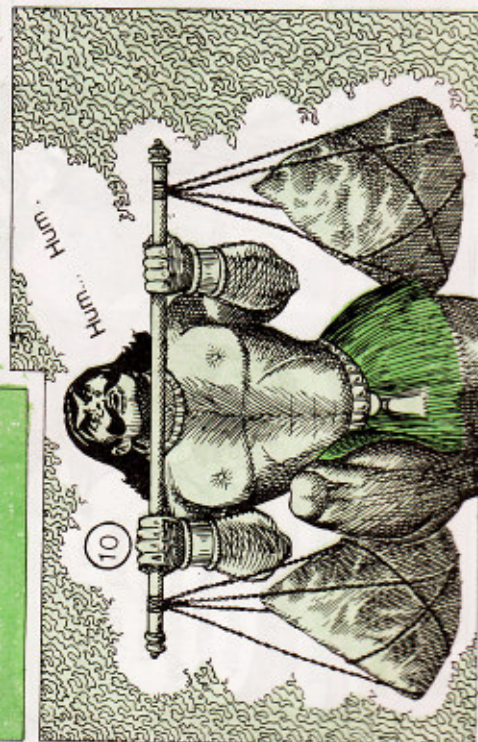


Idumba, tie four ropes each to either end of the stick, tie their other end to the two mounts and lift them.

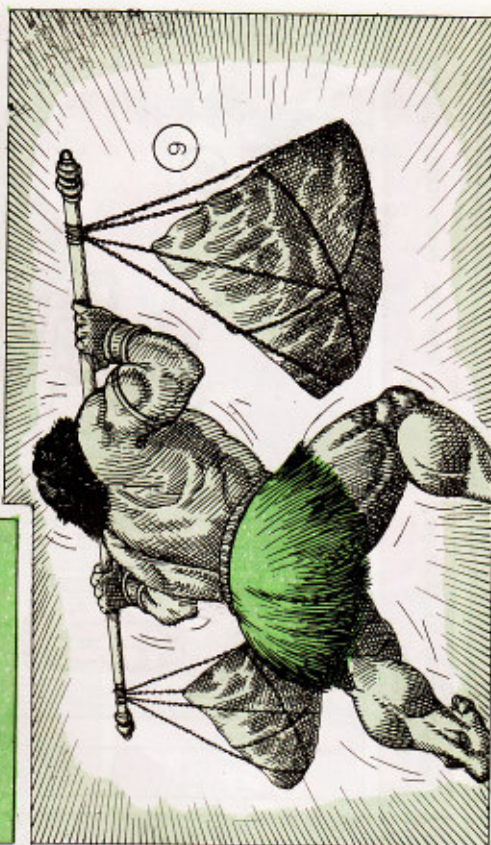
Idumba lifted the peaks slowly like lifting a Kavadi.



After resting a while, he tried to lift them again but could not.



When he reached Thiruvavinankudi, the hills began to press him down. So he placed them on the ground to rest for a while



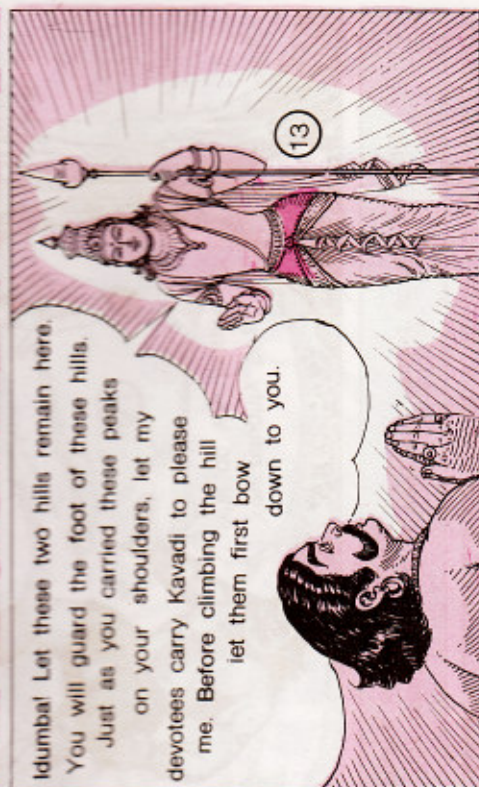
A boy standing under a Vilva tree smiled at him teasingly, noticing his helplessness



Idumba, in anger, sprang at the boy. But surprisingly he fell at the feet of the boy and he died. His wife rushed to the spot.



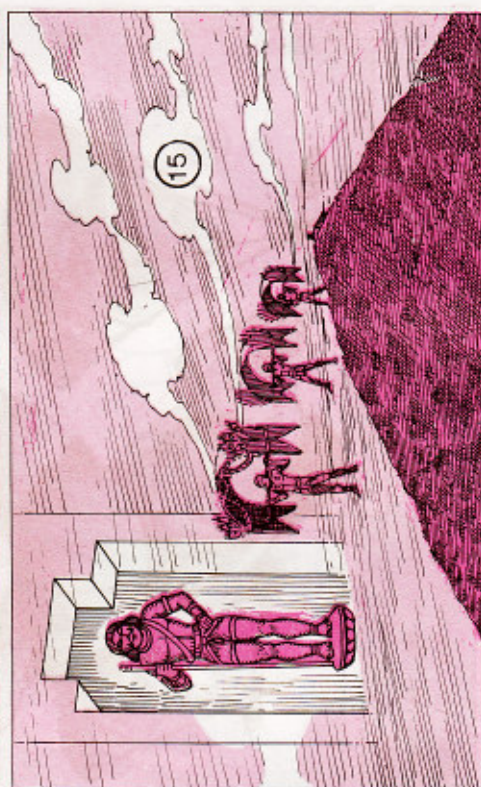
The boy resumed his true form as Lord Muruga and revived Idumba.



Idumba and his wife prostrated before Lord Muruga.



According to Muruga's command, Idumba, even today guards that place.



THE GREATNESS

OF

JAYADEVA'S ASHTAPADI

Tamil Original: Jana

Art: Sankar

English Rendering:

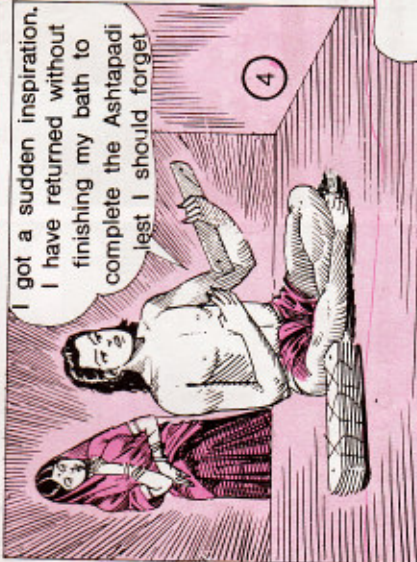
Swami Raghavacharanda

Jayadeva, the author of Gitagovinda was born in a village near Puri. He was greatly devoted to Lord Krishna. Besides, he was a born poet.

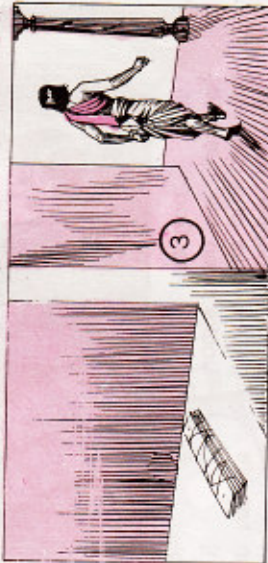
Jayadeva, immersed in contemplation on Lord Krishna, started composing the Gitagovinda in hymns called Ashtapadi. Padmavathi, his wife served him devotedly during this period.



Meanwhile Lord Krishna Himself came in the form of Jayadeva and asked his wife 'Padmavathi to bring the manuscript. Immediately he completed what was left out.



He composed eighteen Ashtapadis. While composing the nineteenth, he was to write on the episode wherein Lord Krishna supplicates to Radha. Somehow Jayadeva was reluctant to write on that. He closed the manuscript and went for bath.



Jayadeva returned after his bath. He looked at the manuscript and was surprised to see the composition completed from where he had left off.



What a strange question? You only came back half way through your bath and asked for the manuscript and completed the work.

When did I come before completing my bath? Oh Krishna! Govinda! It is all your leela. Padmavathi! You are really fortunate! The Lord came in my form and gave you His vision, which I have not had so far.



Jayadeva's Ashtapadi became popular everywhere and was praised by one and all. So one day king Sathyaki came with his wife to pay his respects to Jayadeva.



May Lord bless you!

Once a relative of the king died. His wife decided to enter the pyre. The whole city including the king had assembled to witness that event. That day Padmavathi met the queen.



Are you not going to witness the great event?

What is the greatness there? As soon as she heard the death of her husband she too must have died naturally. Why this deliberate effort to give up life?

However much a wife may love her husband, can she give up her life naturally? It is not possible.

Why not? It will certainly happen like that in the case of a wife who looks upon her husband as God.





Shortly she got an opportunity. Once Jayadeva accompanied the king to the forest.



Look, while I am chatting with Padmavathi,
you should report as if you are coming
from the forest bringing the sad news of the
death of Jayadeva.

21

When the queen was talking with Padmavathi, the soldier
came running, and wept loudly.



Hearing that tragic news, Padmavathi fell down and died instantly.



When the king and Jayadeva returned, the king was shocked to hear the happening from the queen. In deep remorse he was about to kill himself with his sword.



Jayadeva then sang in front of his wife's body the Ashtapadi which was composed by the Lord Himself. What a miracle! Padmavathi got up as if from sleep.



The king and the queen fell at their feet.



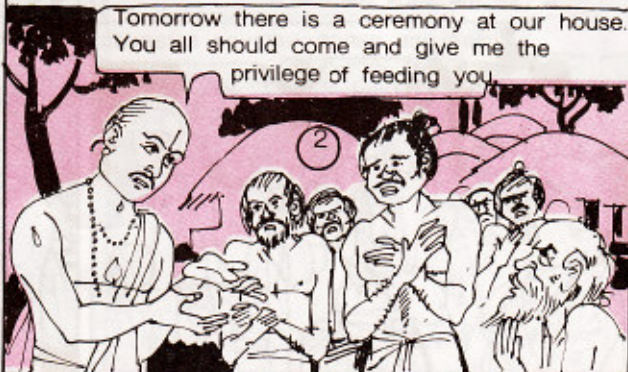
EKNATH

Art: Umapathy
Tamil Original: Devanampriyan
English Rendering: Swami Raghaveshananda



Eknath was a great devotee.

On a particular day he was to perform the obsequies of his ancestors. The usual tradition was to feed the brahmins on that occasion. But Eknath instead went to the poor and low-caste people.



Tomorrow there is a ceremony at our house. You all should come and give me the privilege of feeding you.



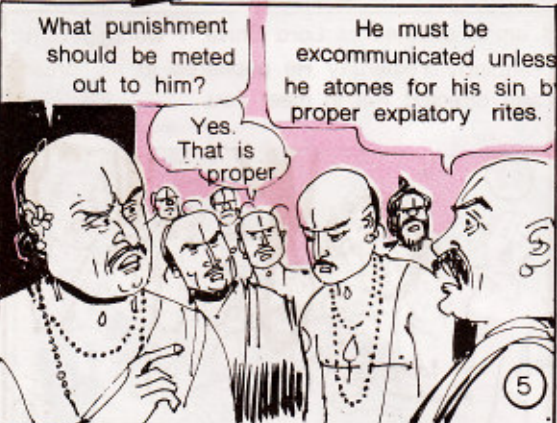
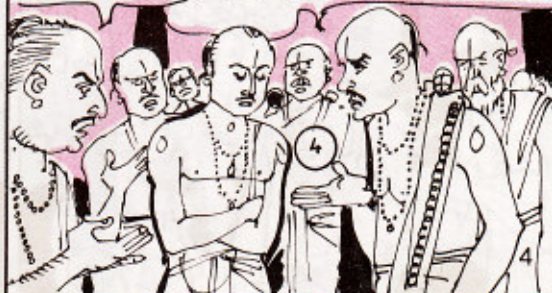
The next

We did not expect such a big feast.

Please eat to your heart's content. It is a privilege to serve you all.

The brahmins of the place came to know about this event. They were furious and went in a group to Eknath's house.

How is it you have broken the tradition of feeding the brahmins on the ceremony day?
Your act deserves condemnation.



What punishment should be meted out to him?

He must be excommunicated unless he atones for his sin by proper expiatory rites.

Yes. That is proper.

He was taken to the river for performing expiatory rites.



Eknath merely submitted to their orders.

He bathed in the river. He smeared his body with the sacred ash. The brahmins chanted the sacred mantras.

.Yan me vaca manasa....

Imam me gange, yamune saraswati.



Then....

Sir, who is Eknath? I want to see him immediately.



Look there. The one who is standing in the water is Eknath.

Who is this leper? Why has he come here?



Sir, you alone should protect me.

Who are you?

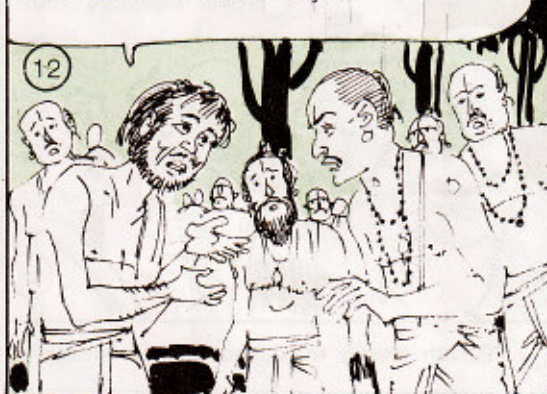


I have come from the village of Thriyambakeshwar.

What service can I do for you?



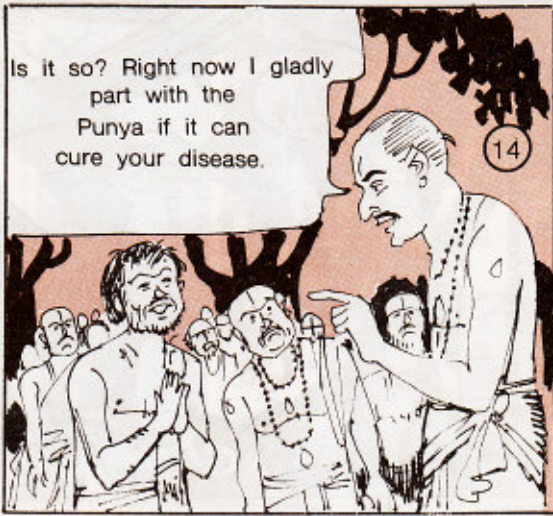
I am a devotee of Lord Shiva. I worship Him regularly. Yesterday He appeared in my dream and directed me to meet you.



He said in my dream that you have accumulated a lot of Punya, by feeding the poor and the low-caste on the ceremony day. If you part with a little of that Punya, my disease will be cured.



Is it so? Right now I gladly part with the Punya if it can cure your disease.



Eknath took a handful of water from the river and sprinkled it on the leper.

Oh! What a great miracle! The leper has been made whole.

How bright the leper looks now!

What a wonder it is!



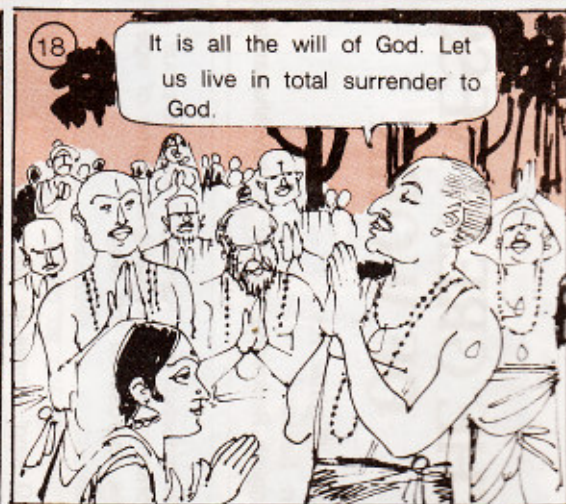
We have committed a great sin by maligning him.



Please forgive us.



It is all the will of God. Let us live in total surrender to God.



THE GREATNESS OF WORK

Tamil Original: R.V.
Art: Sankar
English Rendering: Swami Raghaveshananda

In a forest near Karmapuri, lived a pious brahmin. When his daughter came of age he approached the king.

O king! I have to perform my daughter's marriage. Be kind enough to help me.

1

All right! Who is there?

A servant came.

Get a thousand sovereigns from the treasury

2

O king! Excuse me. That amount will not be sufficient for the marriage.

The king somehow could not get angry. He wanted at all costs to satisfy the brahmin.

Then take twenty thousand.

4

Then wait. I shall get you ten thousand.

3

O king! That too is not enough.

Looking at the face of the brahmin, the king understood that he was still not satisfied.

Call the treasurer immediately.

I am already here, O king!

5

The brahmin did not move from the place. Seeing that....

Cashier, open to him the whole treasury Let his daughter's marriage be done on a grand scale



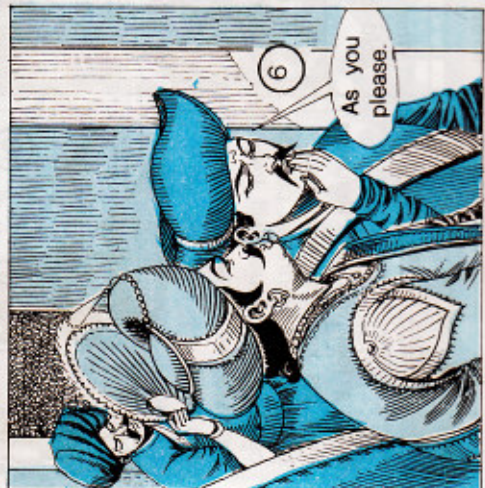
That night the king went in disguise in search of a job. A blacksmith was busy in a shop



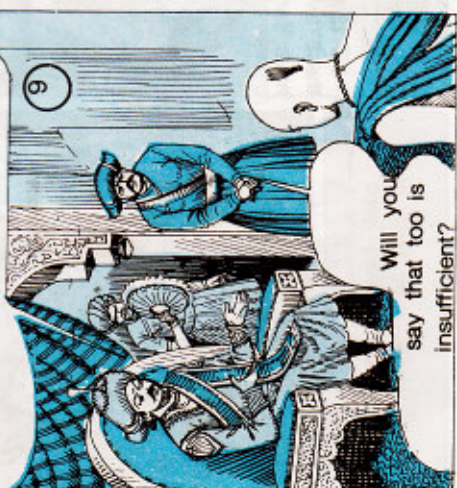
Do you know, why all these offers are insufficient? All the wealth you now have is only an inheritance. If you can give me even a small amount earned by your own hands, that will be enough.



The king uttered something in the treasurer's ears.



Then, if you so desire, I can offer you half of my kingdom.



The whole night both of them worked very hard.



Take! I have only two copper coins to give you as wages.

When the brahmin gave the copper coins to his wife.....

What a fool you are! Refusing half the kingdom, you have brought two worthless copper coins. Of what use will they be? Let me throw them into the ditch.



The brahmin appeared the next morning.

O brahmin! Please accept these two copper coins which I have earned by hard labour.



The next morning, the Brahmin's wife noticed two trees in the exact place, where she threw the coins.

What a great wonder! The tree is full of gold coins, gems, pearls....



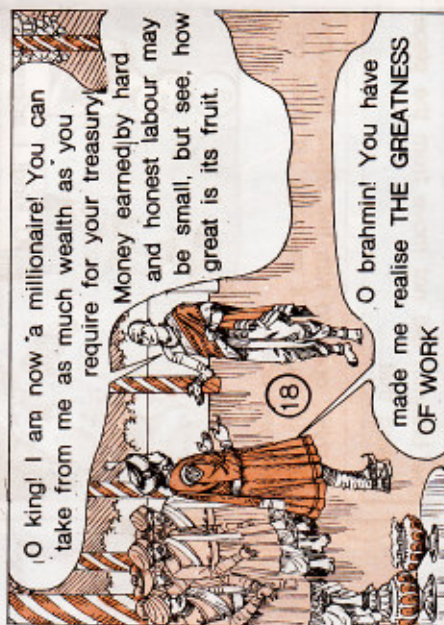
This will be hundred times more valuable than the king's treasure.

The brahmin accepted it with great delight.



Thank you, king! This is enough.

The brahmin performed his daughter's marriage on a lavish style. Even the king attended the marriage with his courtiers.

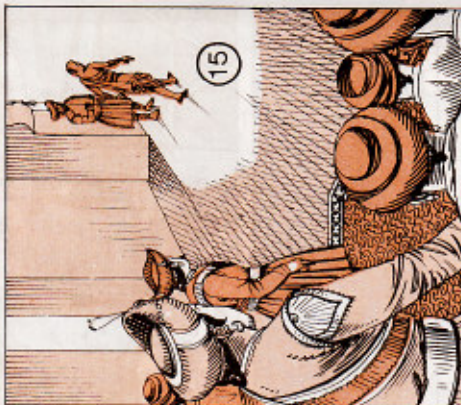


O king! I am now a millionaire! You can take from me as much wealth as you require for your treasury!

Money earned by hard and honest labour may be small, but see, how great is its fruit.

O brahmin! You have made me realise THE GREATNESS OF WORK

The king and others saw the brahmin leaving with great satisfaction.



THE REWARD FOR TRUE SERVICE

Tamil Original: Murali Prasad Art: Sankar
English Rendering: Swami Raghaveshananda

Sage Vasishtha, the Guru of the kings of the solar dynasty, was living in a forest hermitage. The emperor Dilipa with his wife Sudakshina proceeded from his capital city Ayodhya to the hermitage of the sage to have his Darshan and get his blessings.



In the hermitage of sage Vasishtha.....



Revered Sage! By your grace Ayodhya is prospering and the people are living happily. However we have a problem. Kindly solve it.

There is no issue for you to rule the kingdom after you. Is it not your problem?

The sage went into deep meditation, closing his eyes.



After a while, slowly opening his eyes....

O King! Once while returning from Indraloka, after helping Indra you passed by the divine cow Kamadhenu, which could grant whatever is asked of her, without circumambulating and respecting her. That is the reason you are still without any issue.



When the sage said this, the vision of this incident unfolded before his mental eye.



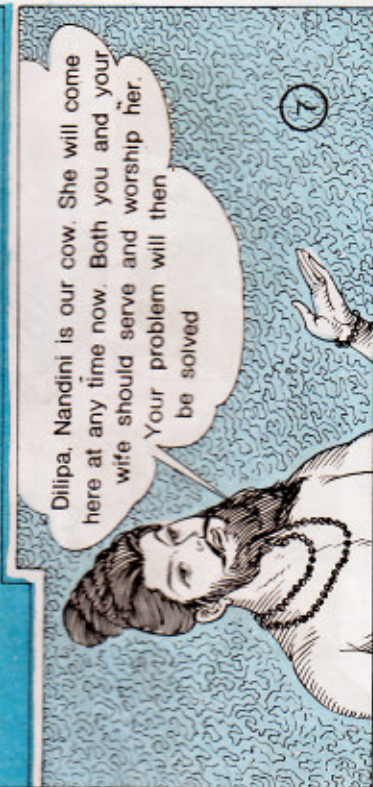
You are not aware of the curse of Kamadhenu. Those who disrespect the great cannot live happily.

Gurudeva did such an event happen? I am sorry for my mistake. I have suffered the consequence so long.

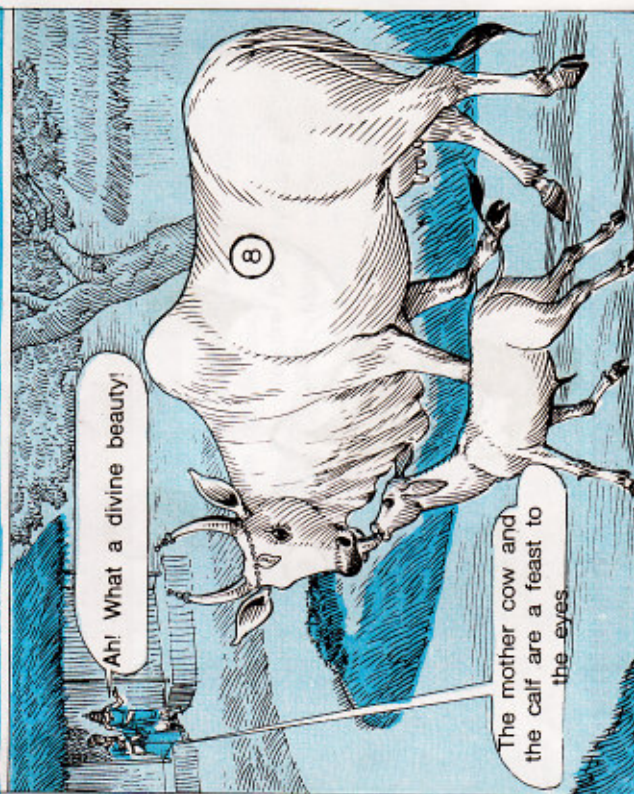
Please bless us that we serve and worship Nandini with love.



The King and the Queen prostrated at the feet of the sage.



At that time, Nandini was returning to the hermitage with her calf.



From that day, the emperor and his wife bathed the cow, decorated it and worshipped it with flowers and served it the best of fruits. The king followed it wherever it went and looked after it with great care.

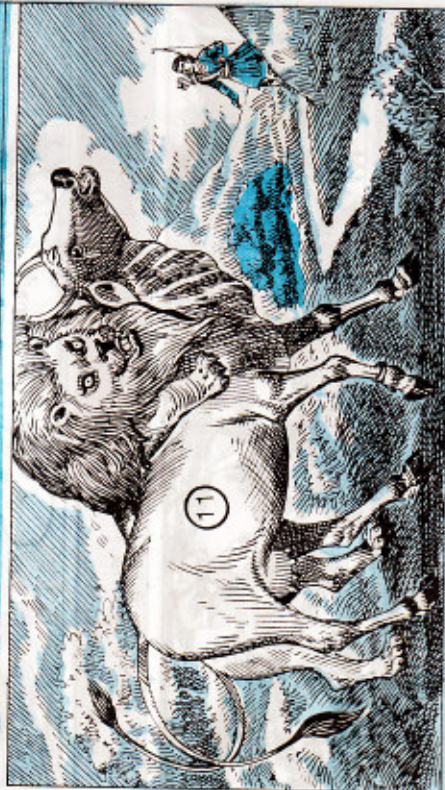


Twenty-one days passed in this way. On the twenty second day, Nandini went by a different hill path to graze. The king was fascinated by the natural beauty of the place. Just then he heard the agonizing cry of the cow at a distance.

Amma...ma!



Hearing the cry Dilpa ran towards the spot. There he saw..



Dilpa bent the bow and drew the arrow. Just then he felt as though his arm is paralysed.

What is this?
I am unable
to move my arms.



Surprisingly, the lion began to speak in a human voice.....

O king! You will not be able to shoot the arrow at me because I am the servant of Lord Shiva. I shall kill this cow and eat it to appease my hunger

O lion! I am the king of the land. It is my duty to protect my subjects. There is no cow in this world equal to this Nandini. Hence leave it. Instead you can kill and eat me.



The lion released the cow. Dilipa fearlessly went near the lion and sat prostrating before it, with closed eyes.



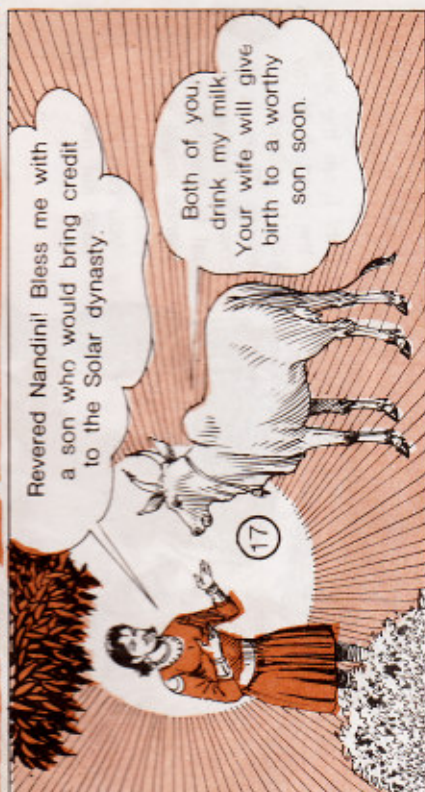
He was expecting the lion to pounce on him. Instead flowers spell on him.



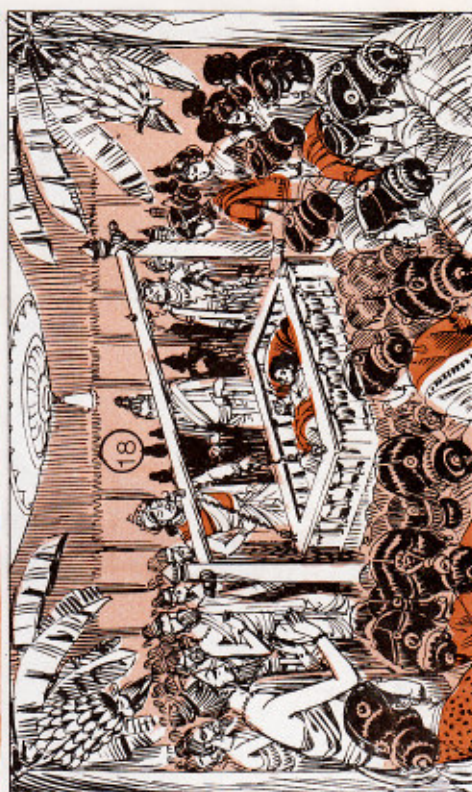
Dilipa looked around. The lion had disappeared. Only Nandini, looking at him with compassion, spoke in a human voice, like the lion.

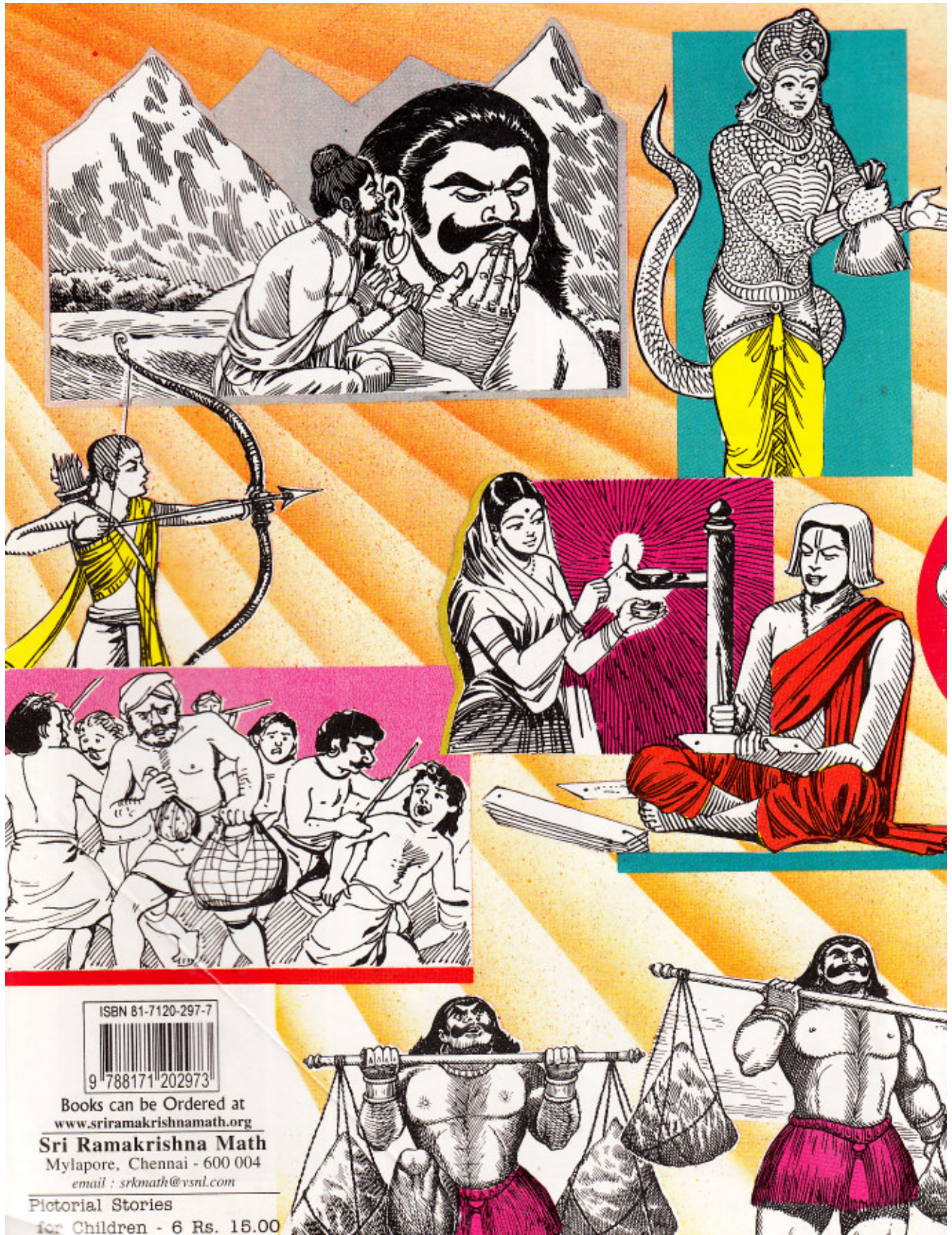


Dilipa bowed down to Nandini.



Accordingly with the blessings of Vasishtha both of them drank the milk of Nandini. The very next year, Sudakshina gave birth to a worthy son named Raghu. The dynasty came to be known by this name from his time. Later on the Divine Lord took birth as Sri Rama in the Raghu dynasty and was therefore also called Raghava.





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